

By Nina Shea

<http://www.nationalreview.com/corner/251765/iraqs-christians-still-under-siege-nina-shea>

Religious persecution in Iraq is so “egregious” that the country has now been included by the **U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom** on a recommended short list of “Countries of Particular Concern” under the International Religious Freedom Act, alongside the likes of Iran and China. No group in Iraq, Muslim or non-Muslim, has been spared massive and appalling religiously motivated violence; however, as the independent federal commission found, the one-two punch of extremist ruthlessness and deep governmental discrimination now threatens the “very existence” of Iraq’s Christian churches (some of whom still pray in Aramaic, the language of Jesus of Nazareth) and Iraq’s communities of Mandeans and Yizidis, which are even older. As last night’s attack again shows, these smallest minorities are not simply caught in the middle. They are being fiercely targeted for their faith.